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ABSTRACT

The pamphlet outlines some specific means by which vocational educators can contribute more to the goals of career education than just the education of students for occupations. The bulk of the pamphlet comprises lists of suggestions designed to help educators to: help students develop self awareness and positive attitudes toward self; help students develop occupational awareness and positive attitudes toward work; provide exploratory work experience; provide job preparation at both high school and post-high school levels; provide career guidance, decision-making experiences, and placement and follow-up services; and contribute to the growth and development of the entire school staff by their concern with their own professional growth and development. (Author/PR)

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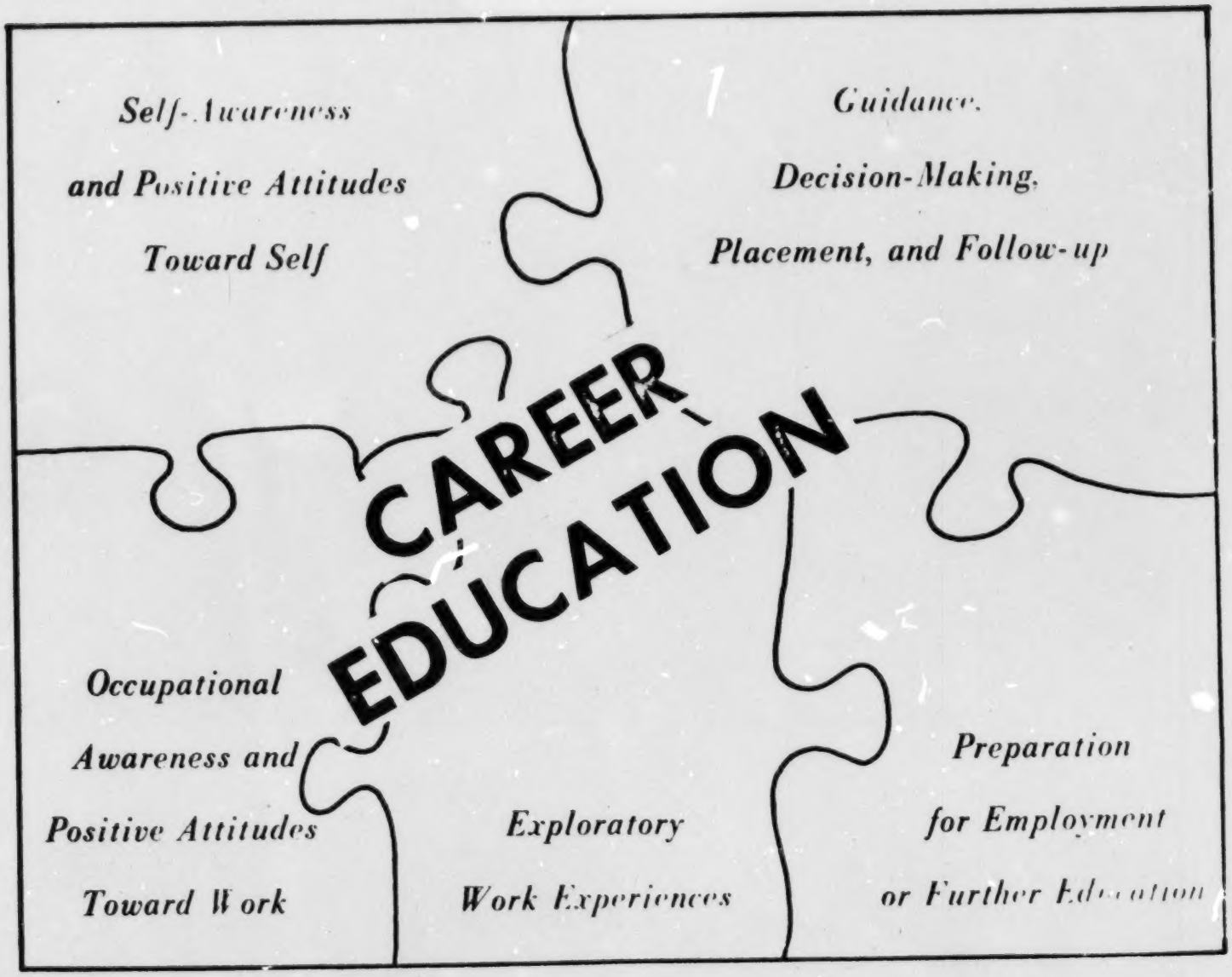

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THE VOCATIONAL EDUCATOR'S ROLE IN CAREER EDUCATION

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Since Sidney Marland* introduced "career education" to the nation in January of 1971, vocational educators have been asking themselves how the K-adult career education movement should or could affect their roles. Typical reactions have been, "What's so new about career education for us? Haven't we always been preparing students for jobs through our secondary and post-secondary vocational education programs?" That is true. However, preparation for an occupation or cluster of occupations is just one component of career education. Vocational educators, along with counselors and teachers of other subject areas, can also contribute much to other goals of career education. Here are some suggestions for vocational educators as they seek to fulfill their roles in helping to maximize career development through career education.

* Dr. Sidney P. Marland, Jr. was then U. S. Commissioner of Education and later Assistant Secretary for Education, Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

Developing Self Awareness and Positive Attitudes Toward Self

In the development of self awareness and positive attitudes toward self, vocational educators can:

1. Be alert for opportunities to compliment students for work well done, thus helping them recognize their strengths and develop self confidence. (Helping students find a few things in which they can excel does wonders in developing positive attitudes toward themselves, school in general, and eventual work roles. Career development theorists have conducted studies which indicate that career choice is often directly related to self concept.)
2. Offer criticism, when necessary, in a constructive manner and point out that finding what they cannot do well is just as important as it is to find what they can do well. (Thus, rather than feeling crushed because of inability to do a task well after several honest attempts, students can accept it as a learning experience regarding their personal limitations. They can then proceed to explore and try out other activities until they have developed a repertoire of skills about which they can "feel good.")
3. Be alert for opportunities to compliment students for demonstrating human relations skills. (Much of our self concept is derived from our interaction with others.)
4. Take advantage of opportunities in simulated work situations to discuss the interdependence of workers and the need for cooperation among workers, as well as between employees and employers; and to discuss the importance of each worker and how he needs recognition as having personal worth.
5. Use vocational student groups to develop positive attitudes.

Developing Occupational Awareness and Positive Attitudes Toward Work

In the development of occupational awareness and positive attitudes toward work, vocational educators can:

1. Include, in the orientation and introduction to each course, information concerning the relationships of what is to be learned to real-life and/or vocational situations. (Throughout a course, relate learning to its application outside of school.)
2. Be alert for opportunities to acquaint students with job descriptions of occupations which utilize the particular skills being taught. (In business education, for example, copy material for typing drill may include brief descriptions of a variety of office and business occupations.)
3. Stress the importance and contribution of jobs related to vocational subjects and discuss the interrelatedness of these jobs.
4. Use "outside experts" representing various occupations to substantiate the need for skills being taught; and to acquaint students with the nature of work involved in these occupations.
5. Discuss related occupations and point out that different people prefer different kinds of work and that each is entitled to his/her choice of available opportunities.
6. Keep abreast of employment trends and share this information with students to avoid an oversupply of trained workers for some jobs and not enough for others.

Provide Exploratory Work Experience

In the development of career orientation and exploration programs, the vocational educator can:

1. Provide a sound base for making decisions concerning high school electives by developing short-term opportunities for middle or junior high school students to observe people working and actually test their interests and aptitiudes in a variety of occupations in simulated or real work situations. (This will require school-community cooperation. Retired persons are often interested and available to assist in exploratory work projects.)
2. Divide the block of time provided in middle or junior high school for "practical arts" into short-term exploratory courses in agri-business, business education, distributive education, health occupations, home economics and industrial education. (An alternative would be the exploration of the 15 job clusters suggested by USOE.)
3. Provide interdisciplinary simulated experiences utilizing the skills from many subject areas in operating a production or service business. (This is a most appropriate method of exploring occupations at the middle or junior high school level.)
4. Discuss case histories of the personal career development of real people in the career fields related to their vocational subject.

rovide Job Preparation

At the high school level, vocational educators can:

1. Help students establish realistic career objectives and plan ıcational programs to achieve these objectives.
2. Encourage students to prepare for a cluster of occupations, keeping several options open regarding their "next step" after leaving school, including continuing education as well as immediate employment.
3. Expand vocational education programs to provide continued exploratory experiences and preparation for employment and/or further training in a wide variety of occupational fields.
4. Encourage students to develop human relations skills as well as marketable vocational skills to help them obtain, hold, and advance on a job. (Students should be employable and promotable.)
5. Expand school-community cooperation to provide more on-the-job training with related class work.
6. Better meet the needs of the community as well as individual students, by using input from resource studies, advisory committees, and the Employment Service of the Department of Labor when revising vocational education curriculum.
7. Ensure that the vocational education department casts a favorable impression in the eyes of all students in the school. (Students may be silently counseled out of a program if the department does not have a good image.)
8. Avoid locking students into a preparation sequence. (Vocational educators must recognize that career education is developmental and consequently what is preparation for one student may really be exploratory for another--even though exploration is not the course's objective.)

At the post-high school level, in addition to the above, vocational educators can:

1. Help individuals adjust their career objectives when necessary or desirable. (Help these students formulate and implement plans for achieving new objectives.)
2. Provide opportunities for individuals to retrain, update, or upgrade their skills.
3. Provide opportunities for adults to explore and develop leisure time pursuits to complement their work, as a part of their total life style.

Provide Career Guidance, Decision-Making Experiences, Placement, and Follow-up

In the development of decision-making skills, career guidance, placement, and follow-up services, vocational educators can:

1. Ensure that course work is augmented with career guidance and counseling services.
2. Provide elementary school, middle school, junior high school, and senior high school counselors and teachers with informtion about high school vocational education programs and about the occupations in which students could some day use the skills attained in these programs. (Provide written materials that can be distributed to students.)
3. Provide decision-making experiences for students in the selection of courses, in classes, and in simulated and/or actual work situations, with opportunities to observe and discuss the consequences of their decisions.

4. Become familiar with requirements for entry-level jobs in their fields.
5. Expand their contacts with community employers as possible sources of employment for exiting students.
6. Expand contacts with school counselors and employment counselors to improve two-way communications regarding qualified applicants and job openings.
7. Encourage students to study, discuss, and role play employment procedures such as discovering job openings, securing appointments for interviews (by phone or letter), completing resumes, completing applications, and selling oneself in an interview.
8. Become familiar with requirements for entrance and for advanced placement or advanced standing in vocational, technical school programs in their field.
9. Expand contacts with admission counselors in post-secondary private and public vocational, technical schools to improve two-way communications regarding qualified applicants and openings in various programs.
10. Expand contacts with post-high school teachers in their field to improve articulation between high school and post-high school job preparation programs.
11. Conduct follow-up studies to evaluate effectiveness of current programs. Ensure that the findings of follow-up studies are used to strengthen the program.

Professional Growth and Development

Vocational educators can also contribute to the growth and development of the entire school staff. They can:

1. Provide in-service programs concerning occupations in their fields for elementary school teachers. (Many, if not most, elementary teachers have had little direct involvement in vocational disciplines. Do not wait for elementary teachers to seek information.)
2. Provide in-service training for middle or junior high school practical arts teachers involved in career exploration programs, by disciplines, or in an interdisciplinary team approach.
3. Provide in-service programs for other secondary teachers concerning the application of their academic subjects in various occupations. (These teachers have probably never considered how their subject matter relates to vocational education.)
4. Become familiar with career development theory as an aid in helping students and other teachers.
5. Be alert for opportunities to integrate career development concepts into courses.
6. Continue their own professional growth through refresher courses and active membership in professional organizations.
7. Periodically update related occupational work experience as a paid employee on a job which is similar to those which students will be seeking upon graduation. (Teachers who frequently update their experience will be quick to extol the merits of this recommendation.)

Summary

These suggestions will no doubt bring to mind many other ways vocational educators can contribute to career education. Their leadership in developing school-community partnerships for comprehensive K-adult career education programs can provide a delivery system for both optimum individual career development and the development of human resources required by our rapidly changing society.